

A LETTER from Monsieur Pett—m to Monsieur B—ys.

Faithfully Translated from the French Original.

S I R,

I Have been once more at Gertruydenberg, and us'd my best Endeavours to prevail with the *Ministers of France* to explain themselves upon the Security their Master was willing to give for evacuating the *Spanish Monarchy*, and to shew them the absolute necessity they were under, after so many affected Delays, to speak very plain, in order to bring the Negotiations to a speedy Issue.

But I found that gaining of time was their Chief Point, and every Pretence of Delay contributed, in their Opinions, to the Interest of their Master.

This indeed surpriz'd me very much, and seem'd so contrary to all good Policy, that I could not forbear arguing this Matter with them; and endeavour'd to demonstrate from their own low Circumstances, and the more happy Condition of the *Allies*, that the deferring of the Peace must, in all human Probability, tend to the Disadvantage of *France*.

And this I thought could be no difficult Task to convince them of, by showing, that the Affairs of the *Allies* were still in the same, or, comparatively speaking, in a more flourishing Condition, than at the time of settling the *Preliminaries*: That their Arms were every where Victorious: That they had the same Generals, vested with the same Power, Interest and Authority: That they were now penetrating into the very Heart of *France*; *Doway* was taken: That whatever Place they should next think fit to set down before, must fall of course; and it was most evident, that nothing in *Flanders* could withstand the Duke of Marlborough and the Prince of Savoy: which made all the World wonder, why the King of France would not make a Peace, when he could no longer make War.

I farther urg'd the Unanimity of all the *Allies*, and the little hopes that were to be conceiv'd of gaining any Advantage, by dividing them among themselves.

I represented to them that *England* was not only able, but still determin'd to carry on the War, till they could obtain a lasting and honourable Peace, as the only means to preserve their present Government and Constitution, and to defeat the Hopes of the Pretender. That the same Parliament was still in being, that had given Twelve Millions to carry on the War, the most effectual and early Supplies that had ever been given: That the same Ministers were still at the Helm, who had conducted their Affairs thro' this long and expensive War, and preserv'd the Publick Credit beyond Example. And that notwithstanding the removal of the Earl of Sunderland, the Q— had publickly declar'd and promis'd, She would make no farther Alterations in her Ministry.

Here they interrupted me, and said, Indeed if all that I had said was true, the Measures that *France* was taking would seem very unaccountable; but they could not believe me so ignorant of what was doing in *England*, as not to think that *France* had good Reason to change her Stile, and expect a Peace upon far better Terms, than could be hop'd for, or even thought of last Year: and they believ'd I would be of the same opinion, when I saw the *English General disgrac'd*, or so mortify'd that he could

no longer serve; the Ministry discarded, and the Parliament dissolv'd.

They observ'd that I was very much startled at these Notions, and entertain'd them as utter Impossibilities; upon which they told me in short, That these Measures were already concerted betwixt *France*, and her Friends in *England*.

I was still more surpriz'd, and beg'd a farther Explanation; upon which, with the usual Freedom and Confidence that they have always treated me, they said, It was true indeed that Q—A— had declar'd, she would make no further Changes in her Ministry, she was sensible how acceptable her present Ministers were to all her People; but bid me observe the Artifice of her new Advisers. This Declaration was confin'd to Ministry, and therefore the Letter of her Promise was not broke, if she did not turn out any one of her Cabinet-Council, or that might properly be call'd a Minister of State. There was a Latitude left to remove all the Chief Officers that do not come strictly under that Denomination, which would soon be done, by picking out of the Offices of the Chief Consequence, all that are known to be in the true Interest of their Country, and to be the best Friends, and most faithful to the Chief Ministers, without any regard to their having serv'd Ill or Well: And when these are all remov'd, and others of a quite different Interest and Principle put in their room, in whom the Ministers cannot at all confide, the Ministers may say, if they please, still continue in their Posts, Q—A— has promis'd not to turn them out.

They desir'd me further to observe, that there was no Engagement not to dissolve the Parliament, which was now labour'd Night and Day, and very great hopes given of its being accomplish'd, or at least that no Instances should be able to obtain a Declaration to the contrary: And if the States General, foreseeing of what fatal Consequence a Dissolution of the Parliament must be to the whole Alliance, should represent their Apprehensions upon this Head, tho' in a most submissive manner, they will be told, They meddle with things that they have nothing to do with; and there are those who have now Access to Q—A—, who will satisfy her 'tis a Treatment that She ought to resent.

Upon this foot they press'd it very home to me, that whether the Parliament be dissolv'd or not, the King of France must find his Account in it either way: If it be dissolv'd, he will immediately have the Satisfaction to see all those Great Men oblig'd to quit their Employments, who have been the Chief Instruments of reducing his Power; and if they will quit, who can help it? There is no Breach of Promise in that Case neither. He knows very well, that those who must succeed them gave all the Obstruction they possibly could, to the Publick Affairs thro' the whole Course of King William's Reign; that they were against entering into this War; that they were ready to acknowledge the Duke of Anjou for King of Spain; and have, in no Instance of their Lives, given him reason to think they repent of their good Wishes to him.

If this Parliament be dissolv'd, it must be with the prospect of having a new Parliament of quite another Complexion: and what, said they, can

France

France wish for more? And for this, the People of England are prepar'd by Dr. Sacheverel. And here they could not forbear expressing their Satisfaction at the general Infatuation of the Common People, that so inconsiderable a Man could do their Cause so much service; and that a Criminal convicted of the Highest Crimes and Misdemeanours, should be suffer'd, in a Country, that pretends to any Government, to ride in Triumph thro' the Kingdom, to draw in the deluded People to consent to their own Destruction.

But then admitting that the Eyes of the People should be open'd before a new Election, and that a Parliament should be chosen contrary to their Expectations; the French Ministers were far from thinking, that France would not have been a sufficient Gainer by the Dissolution of the Parliament: For the common Methods of summoning and choosing a Parliament, and their necessary Rules and Forms upon first Meeting, before they can come to do any Business, will take up so much time, that they did not all Question but the Publick Credit would have suffer'd so much, before the Sense of a new Parliament could be known, that the Mischief to England would be irreparable.

The very Thought of destroying the Publick Credit so transported them, that they enter'd immediately upon the Advantages that France must surely reap, even altho' the Parliament should not at least be dissolv'd; and so did but slightly mention the hopes they had of the great Confusion that must necessarily attend a new Election, when the People are so heated, and the opposite Parties so fir'd and enrag'd one against another. But here they had their fears, and were apprehensive, that the Hereditary Right being so publicly avow'd and so little discourag'd, some of their well meaning Friends might declare too soon, before the Principal Affairs in England had brought Matters to bear, or the King of France was in a condition to back the Pretender with a sufficient Force to assert his Hereditary Right.

But what they chiefly insist'd upon, and with the greatest Satisfaction, was the Scheme that was laid for destroying the Publick Credit in England; which would make it utterly impossible for the Allies to carry on the War any longer. They boasted of certain Assurances that were given to France either to dissolve the Parliament, or to order it so, that all People should expect a Dissolution; which they flatter themselves will have the same effect. The very Report, they are confident, well manag'd and improv'd by their Friends to the best advantage, will so far affect the Publick Credit, that they expect every day to hear the Socks and Bonds are very considerably fall'n, and that Bank-Stock will soon be above Twenty per Cent worse than at the beginning of the Year; which may probably end in a Run upon the Bank, but will certainly oblige the Bank to make such Provisions against all Events, that they will be no longer able to supply the Necessities of the Government; and if the faithful Endeavours of their Friends do not fail, they are not without hopes, to see the Army before the End of this Campaign want their Subsistence.

They instanc'd in a great many more particulars, and from the whole concluded, that if Marechal Villar could spin out this Campaign without hazarding a Battle, and oblige the Allies to spend this Summer in three or four Sieges; the Advantages that France would reap from the Measures concerted in England, would overbalance the Loss of three or four of their most considerable Towns.

They fell after this into the Cant of their Clergy; "That God, who disposeth the Hearts of the Kings, is doubtless preparing some secret Remedy,"

"dies, or some unforeseen Events; and that by dividing the Nations who will have War, he will declare for their Master's Arms, and the just Cause he defends."

By all therefore, Sir, that I can gather from their Discourse, the French Ministers seem to have new Instructions, and will talk to you in quite another Language: "That France is not reduc'd so low, as to declare what Security his most Christian Majesty will give for the Evacuation of Spain and the Spanish Indies, before they had heard the utmost Demands of the Allies."

There dropt another thing from them, which still more surpriz'd me; "That there would come Instructions from England to their Plenipotentiaries, To make use of any Expedient, rather than suffer the French Ministers to leave Gertruydenberg; and depending upon this, they will tell you, "That if the Allies desire they should go home without entering into any further Negotiation, they were ready to be gone as soon as a Day should be prescribed them."

In the mean while they are drawing up a Manifesto, wherein they will lay the whole Blame of breaking the Peace upon the English Plenipotentiaries and the Deputies of the States; and they talk with confidence, that their Friends in England are ready to back and support all that they shall think fit to publish, and to persuade the People rather to believe what France shall say, than depend upon the Honour, Integrity, and great Abilities of their own Ministers.

I have now, Sir, very fully explain'd to you the Chief Dependence of France at this Critical Juncture, and must submit it to your Discretion to make the best use you can of it, for the Good of your own Country, without exposing the Author of your Intelligence to the Resentment of the French Ministers; which you know will render me for ever incapable of doing the like Service for the future.

I shall not pretend to give my Advice; the States General are a wise People, and very watchful of their own Interest: but if they shall see the Expectations of France answer'd in most particulars, and those Measures taken in England upon which France builds all her Hopes; who can wonder if the States General should think it high time to look after themselves?

But surely France must be mistaken: There cannot be a Set of Men in England, who, if they had the Power, would run the risque of sacrificing their Country to their own Ambition. The People of England are in daily expectation, by a safe and honourable Peace, to reap the Fruits of so much Blood spilt, and the many Millions that have been expended: And if they shall see all at once, Their best Allies ill treated and disgusted; the Parliament dissolv'd; A happy and successful Ministry disgrac'd, to make room for what no body is yet willing to name; The Publick Credit, from a most flourishing Condition, reduc'd to the lowest Ebb; The Properties of many thousand Persons concern'd in the Publick Funds, who have ventur'd their All for the Support of the Government, abated at least one fifth of their present Value; The moral Certainty of an advantageous, lasting, and honourable Peace, quite vanish'd, and the Nation labouring under the Burden of a War which they are no longer able to Support: The Spirit of the English Nation will awake, and pursue with Vengeance the Authors of such Bold, Desperate, and Destructive Counsels.

I am, &c.